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SCHILLER'S THEORY OF THE LYRIC.

THOUGH Schiller was not primarily a lyric poet, he has played an important part in the history of German lyric poetry by the originality of his production in this form and by his influence upon other poets, as well as by the great and lasting popularity of many of his poems. Furthermore, as few great poets have been so prone to ratiocination about their art as was Schiller, his theory of the lyric must be a matter of interest to the investigator in this field; and even if the study of his theory shall tell us more about Schiller than about the lyric, the result will justify the investigation. In view of the profound changes in Schiller's manner and attitude from the days of *Die Räuber* to those of *Die Braut von Messina*, it is clear that the basis of our study must be chronological, unless we arbitrarily isolate some one period in the poet's life and ascribe to it "classical" value—a dogmatic assumption that has no right to be in a descriptive paper. Since Schiller's works include no formal study of the lyric, his theory must be inferred and pieced together from various indirect sources: his æsthetic treatises, his criticisms of himself and other poets, and the utterances scattered through his correspondence.¹ It is hardly necessary to state that the indications given by this fragmentary material are often vague and incomplete.

It seems probable that Schiller never looked upon lyric poetry as equal in rank and dignity to the epic or drama; most of his utterances rather seem to stamp it as an inferior form. Thus in 1782, in his anonymous review of *Die Räuber*, he threatened to relegate the author of this play from the drama to the ode, somewhat as if that would imply a descent (*Werke*, XIII, 198). In 1788, he gave "poems" the fourth place in the list of his interests, after dramas, stories, and "historical tableaux" (*Briefe*, II,

¹SCHILLER's works are referred to in BELLERMANN's edition, Bibl. Inst., Leipzig (*Werke*); his letters in JONAS's complete edition, Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart (*Briefe*); the correspondence with Körner in GEIGER's edition, with Humboldt in LITZMANN's third edition, Cotta, Stuttgart (*Briefwechsel*); GOETHE's works and letters in the Weimar edition (*Werke*, *Briefe*).

148). In 1789, in answer to Körner's advice to adopt the lyric as his specialty, he not only confessed that lyric poetry was "an exile" for him, but characterized it as "the pettiest and most ungrateful of forms" (*Briefe*, II, 237 f.)—a judgment that was clearly influenced by the self-depreciative mood of the moment, but that persisted for some time; several weeks later, he was still determined, after the disproportionate amount of labor he had expended upon *Die Künstler*, to eschew lyric poetry for a long time to come (*Briefe*, II, 262). In 1791, indeed, while he was working at his *Thirty Years' War* and his translation from the *Æneid*, Schiller told Körner that he was saving his "best hours" for a lyric poem—probably *Das Lied von der Glocke* (*Briefe*, III, 143); but this is to be read in connection with his feeling that lyric poetry is far more dependent upon "mood" *Stimmung*, than any other form (*Briefe*, IV, 61; V, 406). In the treatise *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* (1795), "merely lyric" treatment is contrasted with the treatment of characters and actions as implying a limitation in the poet (*Werke*, VIII, 355 f.); and in 1802 the "merely lyric" treatment of his own *Kassandra* is again contrasted apologetically with a possible dramatic treatment (*Briefe*, VI, 415). Fragmentary and desultory as these utterances are, the fact that practically all of them point in one direction gives us reason to suppose that Schiller did consistently and seriously consider the lyric a relatively "petty" form.

Schiller's earliest utterances on the subject of lyric poetry are found in the long letters written in 1778 to his schoolmates Scharffenstein and Boigeol at the Military Academy; here the young poet enters a solemn protest because his friends have impugned the genuineness of his emotion (*Briefe*, I, 5, 10). The test is that of sincerity, but here conceived rather as a moral quality in himself than as an æsthetic quality in his poetry. "Fancy" (*Phantasey*) is used about in the sense of insincerity, and with it is contrasted "feeling" (*Gefühl, Herz*) as the genuine element in poetry. The themes mentioned here are God, religion, friendship, with an indefinite "etc." that might be conceived to stand for love or patriotism. As qualities of style, elevation and

metaphor (*Schwung, Bilder*) are emphasized. The influence of Klopstock, the very thing charged by the two friends, is quite evident in the conception of the lyric that appears in these letters.

In 1781, when Schiller first appears as a critic in the public press, the supreme test he applies is still that of sincerity, and "fancy" still appears as opposed to truth. It is interesting to find Schiller here (*Werke*, XIII, 179) bringing against his rival Staudlin precisely the same charge that he had repelled with such indignation three years before, when his schoolmates brought it against him—that one of his religious poems is "rather the effusion of the poet than of the Christian." Apart from sincerity, the tests of variety, moderation, and knowledge of good authors (*gute Lektüre*) are applied. In the reviews Schiller published in 1782 we find the storm-and-stress quality of originality emphasized as the principal requisite (*Werke*, XIII, 207, 209 f.), and both Schwab and Staudlin criticised for their lack of individual emotion. The test of sincerity is again in evidence, and from this point of view the favorite Swabian form of occasional or "casual" poetry, to which Schiller himself was then much addicted, is condemned as a "bastard daughter of the muses" (*Werke*, XIII, 204 f.); and Schwab is mildly ridiculed for cultivating poetry merely as an avocation (*Werke*, XIII, 206 f.), a thing that had been the common pretense of most German poets not long before. In spite of the demand for originality, an acquaintance with good models is still accounted a virtue (*Werke*, XIII, 207, 214); and Schiller admits the "modest" claims of Kleist, Uz,¹ and Gellert to be recognized as models, after the "ancient Greeks and Romans." Schiller's critical vocabulary at this time is naturally rather vague; so far as can be inferred from his terminology, his theoretical conception of the lyric may be expressed in the following formula: A lyric poem is the sincere expression in elevated language, in melodious verse,² of original, individual emotion (or thought), in an enthusiastic mood, tempered by moderation, under the influence of the

¹ Fourteen years later, Schiller counts Kleist and Uz among the obsolete authors of a dead past (*Briefe*, IV, 462; V, 33).

² *Wohlklang*, and a versification that is *rein, angenehm und fließend*, are virtues noted in the poetry of Staudlin and Schwab (*Werke*, XIII, 210, 207).

best models. It is especially interesting to note the calm, judicial tone of the critic Schiller, coincident with the extravagance of the storm-and-stress poet Schiller; indeed, the critic directly condemns the extravagance of the poet in the brief review of his own *Anthology* (*Werke*, XIII, 212 f.). We may remark in passing that during this period Schiller not only infuses his dramas with lyricism, but as a matter of theory definitely demands subjectivity of the dramatist; the dramatic poet must sympathize with his heroes, love them, identify himself with them (1783; *Briefe*, I, 114 f.). The inevitable recantation of this position is found in the treatise *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* (*Werke*, VIII, 331 f.).

The next period in Schiller's career as a critic may be called his first philosophic period, and delimited as that of his early friendship with Körner, before his study of Kant's philosophy; the critical utterances of this period begin in 1785, and are finally summed up and rounded out in the review of Bürger's poems in 1790. There are still occasional echoes of phrases characteristic of the earlier period; as when Stolberg is found lacking in sincerity, and his *Phantasie und dichterische Malerei* are opposed to *Natur und Empfindung* (1786; *Briefe*, I, 325). But on the whole this period wrought a great change in Schiller's attitude toward poetry. On the one hand, his own tendency toward philosophic speculation was greatly furthered by Körner; on the other hand, Wieland's frank criticism of him made such a deep impression on Schiller that he earnestly sought to acquire the polite qualities that Wieland said he lacked—"correctness, clearness, delicacy, refinement, good taste" (July, 1787; *Briefe*, I, 361). A year later Schiller wrote to Körner that he was reading "only the ancients" in order to "purify his taste"¹ and to acquire simplicity and "classicality" (August, 1788; *Briefe*, II, 106). Meanwhile Schiller found the spirit of the absent Goethe everywhere present in Weimar, and felt himself rather repelled than attracted by Goethe's contempt for all speculation, his attachment to nature,

¹ It is an interesting indication of Schiller's taste that as late as January, 1787, he could find BLUMAUER's *Ode an den Nachstuhl* "quite charming" and adapted to reading at the table (*Briefe*, I, 330). Compare the grotesque passages he quotes with high praise from Schwindrazheim in 1782 (*Werke*, XIII, 205 f.).

"carried to the point of affectation," and his frank sensuousness, *Resignation in seine fünf Sinne* (August, 1787; *Briefe*, I, 381). The dowager duchess, too, came in for severe reprobation, because "sensuousness" was the basis of her enjoyment of art (*Briefe*, I, 362). But, in spite of his hostility toward Goethe (cf. especially *Briefe*, II, 249), Schiller could not help confessing Goethe's superiority to himself—his greater genius, wider range of knowledge, "surer sensuousness" (which here appears as an advantage),¹ and his æsthetic sense, chastened and refined by "art-knowledge of every sort" (February, 1789; *Briefe*, II, 238); and half unconsciously, and at first quite involuntarily, the younger poet began to yield to the influence of the older—an influence that was to affect his theory of poetry profoundly.

During the period in question Schiller's theory of the lyric centers in his two poems *Die Götter Griechenlands* and *Die Künstler*. Stolberg's criticism of the former leads him to insist that poetry never treats the real, but always only the ideal, here defined as that which is selected by the poet for his artistic purpose from the raw material of the real; that a poem should be judged only by its own rule of beauty, of its "æsthetic arrangement," and that a practical test, moral or religious, is quite irrelevant (December 25, 1788; *Briefe*, II, 187 f.). In connection with the slow process of molding and remolding *Die Künstler*, the relation between philosophy and poetry naturally occupies him. He insists, in spite of Wieland's and Körner's doubts, that this work is a poem, and not a philosophy in verse (March 9, 1789; *Briefe*, II, 247; "verse does not make a poem, a poem is a poem, even in prose," he writes to Körner, March 26, 1790; *Briefe*, III, 66). He exalts the claims of the imagination, which must not be held in check by the reason (*Verstand*); the poet must not fear the "momentary frenzy" (*Wahnwitz*) of the creative process (December 1, 1788; *Briefe*, II, 165). Moritz's demand that every work of art must be a "complete and rounded whole" at first seems to him excessive (January 3, 1789; *Briefe*, II, 200); but, as Wieland too insists upon unity, Schiller strives to round

¹The vacillation on this point finally found its solution in the discovery that the æsthetic occupies a sort of middle ground between "sense" and "reason."

out his poem into a "complete circle" (February 25, 1789; *Briefe*, II, 236). The main question, he now thinks, is whether the central thought of the poem has the highest degree of concreteness, *Anschaulichkeit*. The facility of Wieland and Goethe he must confess that he has not yet attained. The influence of the atmosphere of Weimar in chastening his taste appears from his criticism of the grossness of Propertius (April 17, 1789; *Briefe*, II, 276) and of the commonness of Bürger (April 30, 1789; *Briefe*, II, 283, 285). But he still recalcitrates against Goethe's sensuousness and realism: "Seine Philosophie holt zu viel aus der Sinnenwelt, wo ich aus der Seele hole. Überhaupt ist seine Vorstellungsart zu sinnlich und *betastet* mir zu viel" (November 1, 1790; *Briefe*, III, 113). Goethe's dictum that all philosophy is merely subjective also offended Schiller's faith in the reality of the absolute.

The effect of the various influences acting upon Schiller during the six years from 1785 to 1790 appears clearly in his review of Bürger's lyric poems, published in January, 1791 (*Werke*, XIII, 336 ff.). Schiller speaks here with the dogmatism of a young university professor, with the absoluteness of an amateur philosopher, with the zeal of a recent convert to "good taste," with the assurance of a critic who has won his spurs by reviewing Goethe's *Iphigenie* and *Egmont* frankly and fearlessly. His criticism is neither psychological nor historical, neither descriptive nor technical, but metaphysical, as he himself afterward confessed. It is unscientific, since it is based, not upon an induction from empirical investigation, but upon a deduction from *a priori* principles. This fact makes it easy to gather from the criticism what Schiller's theory of the lyric is at this time, though this theory is not expressly formulated. The principal demand here made upon the poet is idealization—by which is meant conformity to the highest ideals of a refined and cultivated soul—and coupled with it generalization. That is: while "all that the poet can give us is his individuality," it is necessary that this individuality be purged of all that is sensual and merely characteristic, ennobled and chastened up to the standard of the "purest and highest humanity;" and the personality of the poet

is worth while only for what is typical in it of the race as a whole. The poet must collect all the scattered rays of perfection in his object, or if he express himself, concentrate all that is beautiful, noble, and excellent in him into one radiant beam, make every detail serve the harmonious unity of the whole, and raise all that is individual and local into the sphere of the universal. If he shall claim to be a "popular" poet, his popularity must appear in the selection of his material and the simplicity of his treatment, not in any concession to the crude taste of the vulgar mob.¹ The poet must compose at an ideal distance from the passion or emotion to be expressed, so that it may not master him in the process of expression; he must avoid all extravagance, and in general recognize the "principles of good taste." He must not forget the ennobling influence of true art, and as a popular poet he must strive to refine and educate the rude soul of the people. The theory that underlies this whole criticism may be summed up in the following formula: Lyric poetry should be the beautiful and tasteful expression in fit words of the idealized, generalized emotion (or thought) of a cultured soul, in an exalted mood, but free from the immediate stress of any strong feeling. It is not difficult to see in this theory and criticism the ideas and ideals expressed with such enthusiasm and poetic rhetoric in *Die Künstler*. It is a significant fact that the name of Goethe does not appear in the list of poets whom Schiller plays out as trump cards in his reply to Bürger's protest—Denis, Göckingk, Hölty, Kleist, Klopstock, von Salis! One wonders what the result would have been if Schiller had at this time attempted a criticism of the lyrics inspired by Friederike, Lili, and Frau von Stein.

The second philosophic period in Schiller's development as a critic opens with the study of Kant's *Kritik der Urteilkraft* in 1791, and continues until the friendship with Goethe begins to exert its profound influence in 1794. As it happens, this period too culminates in an extensive criticism of a lyric poet, Matthisson. A reaction from the former period is evident immediately,

¹ It is worthy of remark that Schiller pays no attention to the *Volkslied*, the influence of which had helped to work a complete transformation in Goethe's lyric poetry, and was to dominate the romantic lyric.

in that Schiller now asserts that philosophic subjects are absolutely unsuited to poetic treatment (November 28, 1791; *Briefe*, III, 170). With the modesty of a learner sitting at the feet of Kant, he confesses that he is a mere dilettante in æsthetic theory (May 25, 1792; *Briefe*, III, 202); that criticism has really been an injury to him as a poet, in that theoretical introspection has chilled the ardor and boldness of his earlier years and checked the freedom of his imagination; but he hopes (foreshadowing his later theory) that when "conformity to art" has become a second nature to him, his imagination will again be free, recognizing only the limits it sets itself. Under the influence of Kant, he sharply differentiates the æsthetic from the ethical; art cannot have a moral purpose; its object is "free enjoyment" (disinterested pleasure), in which the reason (*Vernunft*) and the imagination are active, and in which emotion depends upon conception, not upon sense-impression (*Über den Grund des Vergnügens an tragischen Gegenständen*, *Werke*, VIII, 13 ff.). With Schiller's university lectures on the drama we get a classification of literary forms: wrenching Aristotle's famous *μίμησις* (which he knows through Lessing's *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*), Schiller differentiates drama and lyric, as "imitation," from narration and description; while the lyric is included in the concept of tragedy as an immediate "imitation" of emotion and passion, it differs from tragedy in not representing action, and in not sharing the purpose of tragedy to arouse pity (*Über die tragische Kunst*, *Werke*, VIII, 30 ff.). What the "different purpose" of the lyric is he does not state.

Schiller's attempt to supplement Kant's æsthetics by discovering an "objective principle of taste" led him, in December, 1792, to formulate a new theory of beauty that naturally had a great deal to do with fixing his standards of art. This theory, in its briefest form, runs thus: "Schönheit ist Freiheit in der Erscheinung," or in another formula, "Schönheit ist Natur in der Kunstmässigkeit" (*Briefe*, III, 232, 237 f., 246, 256 f., 266 f., 269), "nature" here standing for freedom in the realm of sense, and beauty being the "self-determination reflected to us from certain phenomena of nature," and expressed by a "technique" that

exists through conformity to law; a law not imposed from without, but coming from within, necessary and innate in the thing expressed (*Briefe*, III, 273). Though this relation may be impossible as an actuality in art, there must at least be the impression that the form is essentially one with the thing formed. Schiller goes so far now as to say that pure art beauty is possible only in an imitation of nature itself, in which self-determination is complete (*Briefe*, III, 273, 275, 279). This theory is based, so Schiller asserts, upon self-observation; he now holds that one must be more than a philosopher, one must be a practical artist as well, in order to arrive at a valid theory of art (February 9, 1793; *Briefe*, III, 248). And yet the *a priori* character of his theory in the preceding period is still in evidence. Schiller still believes in absolute laws of art, founded on what is necessary and eternal in human nature, *in den Urgesetzen des Geistes*, independent of the "accidental and often depraved taste of the time." The genius of the Greeks and of a few moderns akin to them has expressed these laws in eternal and henceforth unattainable models. To formulate these laws is one of the most difficult problems that philosophic reason can attempt to solve—to reduce the processes of genius to principles, and reconcile freedom with necessity (July 13, 1793; *Briefe*, III, 338f.). As to the form of expression, every trace of the artist's individual taste is mannerism; only the highest independence of all subjective and all accidental objective conditions deserves the name of style—pure objectivity is the essence of good style. As to the substance of art, the essay *Über das Pathetische* (*Werke*, VIII, 119ff.) still makes expression of the supersensual the purpose of art; feeling *per se* is indifferent, and its expression as such without æsthetic value. We here have the imagination definitely recognized as "*the æsthetic sense*;" but the æsthetic process is still conceived as one of generalization—"rising from the real to the possible, from the individual to the race."

In the review of Matthisson's poetry (1794; *Werke*, XIII, 359ff.) we shall expect to find an application of Schiller's new æsthetic theory; and so indeed we do, for the principles of "freedom" and "necessity" form the basis of the criticism.

Beautiful art and merely agreeable art are alike free, but only the beautiful is necessary. Poetry is defined as the art of arousing definite emotions through the free action of our creative imagination. The imagination must have free play, and yet inerrantly arouse a definite emotion. To the first end, the poet must be able to calculate the empirical effect of association; he will succeed in this only by following the objective connection of the phenomena involved, as "pure objects," stripped of all that is accidental. But the purpose of this play of imagination is the arousing of certain definite emotions; to this end, the poet must put off all that is accidental and merely individual in his emotion, and appeal to what is universal in his reader. Two properties may be demanded of a poem: objective truth (not reality), or a necessary relation to the object; and subjective universality, or a necessary reference of this object to the emotional nature. The grand style lies in the pure expression of the necessary. So we have the generalization and idealization of the earlier theory reasserted, but on a new basis.

Now, Schiller finds that freedom and necessity are united only in the sphere of human life, hence man is the only possible object of beautiful art. The question therefore arises how to make a place for Matthisson's nature poetry in the scheme of the fine arts. Schiller proceeds first by recognizing a new form, landscape poetry, bearing a similar relation to epic, drama, and lyric as landscape painting does to the painting of human beings and animals. Then he argues that even unconscious nature can be "played over" into the realm of highest beauty—the realm of the human—by a symbolic operation; and nature can become a symbol of the human as a representation either of emotions or of ideas; the former by means of melody, inasmuch as music expresses the form of emotion; the latter according to the laws of the symbolizing imagination. The landscape poet can make up for the essential inferiority of his subject by making his expression highly musical, and by suggesting ideas to the imagination of his reader. It is evident that Schiller is far removed from a complete appreciation of the "nature-sense" of romantic poetry as a mode of lyric emotion.

Having thus constructed a theory of landscape poetry, Schiller finds that Matthisson fulfils all the demands that can be made upon the landscape poet, by the truth and concreteness, the musical beauty, and the intelligence in his poems. He has seized what is generic in the nature forms introduced, his description is dynamic, he follows the law of association. But aside from being a perfect landscape poet, in Schiller's opinion Matthisson is no less successful in the direct expression of emotion. As his themes Schiller mentions friendship, love, religious sentiment, memories of childhood, the happiness of rural life. The simplicity and gentle melancholy of his emotion, his contemplative enthusiasm, the disciplined nobility and chastity of his feeling, these are the qualities of a model idyllic poet. The influence of classical models is not overlooked. Matthisson so fully meets Schiller's theory of the idyllic nature-poet that Schiller considers him quite capable of a "higher flight," of the representation of man in action.

Whether or not we consider this criticism a vast overestimate of Matthisson, one thing is fairly evident: the rather sharp condemnation of Bürger and the high approval of Matthisson are really based on the test of "good taste," on a subjective prejudice in favor of refinement, culture, idealization, and "ethical gracefulness,"¹ and against realism and strong individuality. The ethical trend of Schiller's thought, his deep interest in the problem of the conduct of life, unconsciously affects his judgment, and his criticism inevitably expresses the ideal of his own nature. From his present point of view Schiller tacitly condemns all that is strong and original in his own earlier poetry; and, indeed, he has already frankly laid this poetry on the altar in his reply to Bürger.

It is interesting to notice that at this time Schiller recognizes an empirical science of criticism apart from the philosophy of criticism, with its absolute and eternal laws, which he applies as a test of the value of poetry. Genius by its productions establishes rules of art; these rules may be collected and compared by science, the attempt made to sum them up in more general rules, and finally in a single principle. But since this science of art is based upon experience, it has only the limited authority of an

¹ *Sittliche Grazie* (*Werke*, XIII, 377).

empirical science. It may lead to the skilful imitation of given cases, but never to a positive extension. All extension of the field of art must come from genius; criticism can produce nothing better than correctness (February 3, 1794; *Briefe*, III, 419 f.).

While Schiller was attempting to reconcile his earlier metaphysics of art with the philosophy of Kant, and applying his principles with surprising results to Bürger and Matthisson, he had before him a phenomenon of vastly greater importance in the field of literature—a phenomenon so great that even his absolute principles must curtsy to it, as customs do to kings. Even the words just quoted, on the creative monopoly of genius in the domain of criticism, while based upon Kant, also betray the influence of the phenomenon Goethe upon Schiller's theory. This influence, which had gradually been growing upon the reluctant Schiller during the five preceding years, was finally confessed in the willing and generous homage of the famous letters of August 23 and 31, 1794 (*Briefe*, III, 471 f., 480 f.). Schiller admits that Goethe's calm and clear-eyed observation, his sure intuition, have saved him from the errors into which both metaphysical speculation and an unbridled imagination may fall. Goethe's imagination is the recognized representative of his whole intellectual being, while Schiller himself as a "symbolizing" (or rather allegorizing) poet suffers from a duality of imagination and abstraction, logic and poetry. The unity of Goethe's spirit is the highest state to which man can attain—if he succeeds in generalizing his intuition and giving his emotion a universal validity (here the theory again raises its head). Schiller now tells Körner (September 4, 1794; *Briefe*, IV, 6) that he has "put on a new man" poetically in the last three or four years; and though he still talks of "anarchy in criticism" and a code of objective laws of taste, and in his review of Matthisson frankly appears as both "lawgiver and judge" (September 7; *Briefe*, IV, 8 f.), yet the days of *a priori* metaphysics of poetry are numbered, and Schiller begins to base his theory upon observation of Goethe and of the contrast between his own nature and Goethe's. And now for the first time he begins to take note of Goethe's lyric poetry, and he praises the *Roman Elegies*, admitting, indeed,

that their content is "hardly decent," in the conventional sense of the word (September 20, 1794; July 5, 1795; *Briefe*, IV, 19, 202), but defending them against the charge of immorality, on the ground that only form and the relation of form to content are subject to æsthetic judgment.

In the *Æsthetic Letters* (1794-95; *Werke*, VIII, 170 ff.) we still have the Kantian formula, the ideal arising from the union of the possible and the necessary, and again form is emphasized as the only æsthetic element in a work of art, so that passionate or didactic or moral art would be a contradiction in terms. From the point of view of pure theory, the postulate of universality is carried so far that pure or perfect style is made contingent upon the breaking down of the specific limitations of each art—so that "music in its noblest reach becomes plastic form, and plastic art in its highest perfection becomes music," while poetry, in its appeal to both imagination and emotion, is both musical and plastic. But we find quite different things in the treatise *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* (1794-95; *Werke*, VIII, 310 ff.), the first great monument to the influence of Goethe and of Greek literature upon Schiller's theory. We seem to be on old ground here when we find the purpose of poetry defined as the completest expression of humanity; but the new light immediately appears in the emphatic recognition of realism as equal, and in a limited sense even superior, to idealism as a principle of art. And Schiller is no longer in the realm of metaphysics, but bases his conclusion upon direct observation of Goethe's genius and his own, when he co-ordinates simple poetry, as the complete expression of the real,¹ with sentimental poetry, as the expression of the ideal. It is especially interesting to note how, while tacitly yielding the absolute demand of idealization and generalization formerly made upon all poetry, Schiller now vindicates the dignity of the poetry that does not idealize by contending that simple poetry has an infinity with respect to form, by its complete individualization, just as sentimental poetry has its infinity with respect to matter, by its complete idealization.

The further discussions of this treatise have little bearing

¹ The "real" is of course still differentiated from the "actual."

upon our topic, as the interesting distinctions made between the elegiac and the satirical, and between elegy and idyl and the two types of satire, refer, not to literary forms, but to the general attitude of the poet toward his subject-matter. We need only add that the quality of Schiller's "classicality" remains unaffected; he still demands nobility and moderation of the poet, and calls attention to the opposite extremes to which realism and idealism may lead—the servitude of the sensualist, and the caprice of the phantast. The last words of the treatise imply a total condemnation of the type of romantic poetry cultivated by the Tieck-Schlegel group.

In spite of Goethe's influence, Schiller was still led by the hypercriticism of Humboldt (*Briefwechsel*, pp. 105 f.) as late as September, 1795, to a denial of the "lyric" as Goethe always cultivated it. Schiller admits to Humboldt (*Briefe*, IV, 256) that his poem *Die Ideale* is "too subjectively and individually true to be judged as real poetry, for in it the individual (poet) satisfies a need and frees himself from a burden," and he recognizes as a limitation in his poem that it "communicates the emotion from which it arose"—i. e., unidealized and ungeneralized. Yet Schiller has a feeling, belying his theory, that this elegy has something in it that makes it more poetic than any of his former productions. Not long after, he expresses the opinion that the modern poet had better treat the ideal than the real (October 26; *Briefe*, IV, 301), and that in such a prosaic time the poetic spirit must withdraw from the real world (November 4; *Briefe*, IV, 314). A few months later, however, Schiller notes as an astonishing thing how much more realistic increasing years and the influence of Goethe and the ancients have made him (March 21, 1796; *Briefe*, IV, 437). And now one of Goethe's most individualized and characteristic lyrics makes an indelible impression upon him—Mignon's song "So lasst mich scheinen, bis ich werde," from *Wilhelm Meister*, Book 8; and in his own poems he feels the transforming influence of Goethe (August 12, October 17, 1796; *Briefe*, V, 52, 87). He strongly advises Hölderlin, in whom he recognizes a spirit akin to his own, to avoid philosophic subjects, to cling more closely to the world of sense; to practice concentration,

economy, clear and simple expression; and to form his own rules from a study of the great masters (November 24, 1796; *Briefe*, V, 117 f.). Again, one of Goethe's ballads, *Der Schatzgräber*, shows him how a small and simple subject is capable of the highest æsthetic effect through perfect representation (May 23, 1797; *Briefe*, V, 195). He admits that Goethe is teaching him induction—rising from individual cases to great laws, instead of descending from the general to the particular, as had been his wont (June 18, 1797; *Briefe*, V, 201).

By the middle of the year 1797 Schiller has arrived at a point where he clearly and frankly repudiates his own earlier position. He now emphasizes the importance of the characteristic, and even of the base and ugly, in Greek art, and he condemns the æsthetic philosophy that makes the concept of beauty a mere empty abstraction; he even proposes to substitute "truth" for the much-abused word "beauty" as a technical term (July 7; *Briefe*, V, 216 f.). And from this time on he keeps repeating a formal recantation of his earlier "principles of art," at least as bases of criticism. With reference to Humboldt's critical essay on Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea*, Schiller questions whether philosophy of art has anything to say to an artist, who rather needs "empirical and special formulas that are too narrow for the philosopher;" he asserts that works of the imagination can be judged only by the imagination, that abstract terms cannot adequately express intuition and emotion. He confesses that he was in error when he applied the "metaphysics of art" directly to concrete cases, as in the criticisms of Bürger and Matthisson (June 27, 1798; *Briefe*, V, 393 f., 397). How Goethe regarded this matter at about the same time appears from such utterances to Schiller as these: that praise and blame are always subjective, that many famous axioms are only expressions of an individuality, that there is no connecting link between the practical and the theoretical (Goethe, *Briefe*, XIII, 8, 137, 198). So Schiller was moved by Apel's criticism of his *Jungfrau von Orleans* to insist that there is no bridge leading from transcendental philosophy to fact, to protest against the futile use of empty formulas, and to call for relative and "dynamic" criticism, for recognition of a poem as an organic whole, to be

judged by the law of its own internal economy (January 20-22, 1802; *Briefe*, VI, 332 f., 336, 339 f.). Indeed, Schiller now goes so far as to express serious and quite heretical doubts as to the value of "æsthetics and the theory of art," aside from the "practical" theory that the poet evolves for himself without reference to æsthetic philosophy (*Briefe*, VI, 340); and he repeats these doubts and reasserts his total estrangement from all speculative theorizing in the last months of his life (December 10, 1804; April 2, 1805; *Briefe*, VII, 190, 228).

So much being premised as to Schiller's general attitude at this time, it is not surprising that very little theory of the lyric can be gleaned from the utterances of his later years. We find, indeed, that his tendency now is to ignore the fine distinctions often drawn between the literary forms. So he finds Humboldt's analysis of these forms "too sharp," and reminds him that the imagination easily overleaps the barriers between them (June 27, 1798; *Briefe*, V, 395). He contrasts the lyric rather with the plastic (as he does the musical in the treatise *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*, *Werke*, VIII, 356, note) than with the other literary forms; tragedy, though it too is "plastic," tending more than epic toward the lyric because of its emotional content. In the *Schema über den Dilettantismus* (in collaboration with Goethe, 1799; *Werke*, XIII, 152) the lyric is contrasted with the pragmatic, epic and drama being included under this head as representing action. In the further remarks on the lyric in this "scheme" (Goethe, *Werke*, 47, 312) cultivation of the imagination and of the sense of rhythm and idealization of the common things of life are mentioned as advantages of an interest in lyric poetry; since "there are no objective laws either for the essence or the form of poetry," the amateur is advised to follow good models, originality being assumed as the prerogative of genius; and the statement is made that every cultured person should be able to express his emotions in a poetically beautiful way and so to "make a good lyric poem."

Schiller finds that the lyric mood is peculiarly elusive and independent of the will, in that it is quite unsubstantial and resides only in the purely emotional life. In this connection may

be mentioned the frequent discussion during these later years of the unconscious element in poetry. Though the poet must have a definite subject, the choice of this subject is more a matter of feeling and dim foreboding than of conscious selection (September 15, 1797; *Briefe*, V, 258). Schiller finds that unconscious creation and conscious reflection alternate in Goethe, who therefore "works in the dark," while in himself these processes are intermingled—much to his disadvantage. But when Klingemann in his *Memnon* praises Goethe as an unconscious artist, Schiller protests against this as a biased judgment and appeals to Goethe's great care in the elaboration of his works and to his effort at a clear understanding of his processes¹ (July 26, 1800; *Briefe*, VI, 177). Schiller discusses the subject at length in his letter to Goethe (March 27, 1801; *Briefe*, VI, 262), with reference to Schelling's antithesis between art and nature. Schiller here asserts that the poet begins with the unconscious, and that he is fortunate if by means of his most clearly conscious processes he can represent fully the "obscure total idea" of his conception, to express and communicate which is the purpose of poetry. Here we have the clear statement that the poet's purpose is to reproduce in another his own emotional state. And then Schiller suddenly turns to an evaluation of poetry that carries us back to his earlier theory. The grade of a poet, we learn, depends upon the wealth and content that he has within himself and therefore expresses, and upon the degree of necessity in the effect of his work. The more subjective his emotion, the more accidental it is; objective power rests upon the ideal. Totality of expression is a requisite of all poetry, for without it poetry has no character and is worthless; but the perfect poet expresses the whole of humanity. And so we return here to the test of high culture in the poet, and of the idealization and generalization of his emotion. It is doubtless from this point of view that Schiller praises Goethe's elegies and idyls as the "purest and completest expression of himself and the world" (February 20, 1802; *Briefe*, VI, 355); and that he condemns his own famous ode *An die Freude* as "quite defective"—in spite of its emotional fire "a

¹ See GOETHE, *Briefe*, X, 338; XV, 213.

wretched poem," marking a stage of culture that he must leave far behind him in order to produce anything respectable, and satisfying only the "defective taste of the time" (October 21, 1800; *Briefe*, VI, 211). His present dissatisfaction with *Die Künstler* is doubtless due to a sense of its lack of unity, perhaps also to its philosophic character; he writes (September 3, 1800; *Briefe*, VI, 195) that in revising his poems for the collected edition he is trying to rid them as far as possible of "certain abstract ideas."

If we may venture to deduce a final theory of the lyric from the utterances of these later years, we shall arrive at about the following result: Lyric poetry is the immediate and adequate expression, in rhythmic language, of emotion, whether individual or generalized, with the purpose of reproducing in the reader the emotional state of the poet. It is more dependent upon mood than the other forms, and more involved in the mysterious unconscious play of the imagination and the feelings that is beyond the control of the reason and the will; in this sense it is the most subjective form. Even the simplest content is capable of the highest beauty through perfection of form, but the value of a poem will depend upon the content and culture of the soul expressed in it. And, after all, the lyric is not a distinct literary form at all, but rather a mode of soul-expression that may appear in any of the traditional forms.¹

With regard to the external forms of lyric poetry, Schiller has little to say; the subject does not seem to have interested him. Thus we find no theory of the distich or of the epigram in general, though Schiller was perhaps the most successful of German poets in the use of the epigrammatic distich. The sonnet seems to have had no special meaning to him as a form; he praises Bürger and Schlegel as sonneteers because their sonnets "sing themselves when they are recited" (*Werke*, XIII, 348). Of the other imported forms, tercets are pronounced monotonous and distasteful (*Briefe*, V, 350), and *ottave rime* preferred to them as being "more graceful;" Schiller at first looked upon the *Stanze* as essentially an epic form, and he chose it for his trans-

¹ Cf. GOETHE'S words, *Briefe*, XII, 381 f.

lation from Vergil (*Briefe*, III, 68, 143; cf. Körner, *Briefwechsel*, II, 207); but in the *Xenien* (Schmidt-Suphan, No. 525) it is characterized as peculiarly adapted to the expression of the tender yearning of modest love, a very different use from that which Goethe makes of it. For the ode (*Werke*, VIII, 49; XIII, 198; *Briefe*, II, 249) and the epistle (*Briefe*, III, 66) there is no discussion of external form; for the hymn (*Briefe*, V, 406) only the question whether it will admit of treatment in distichs. The *Lied* is merely mentioned, without any attempt at definition; the ballad is placed somewhat negligently on the very outskirts of the field of poetry (*Briefe*, V, 269, 370 f., 455), but we have no theory of its form or of the relation of the epic and lyric in it; it is looked upon as essentially epic, and yet capable of the expression of ideas. "Elegy" is used in various senses; in the loose conventional way for a sad poem (1782; *Werke*, XIII, 205), in the classical sense of a poem in distichs (with reference to Goethe's elegies, *Briefe*, IV, 19, 49, 202; VI, 355), and finally in the new interpretation of the treatise *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*, referring to the general attitude of the sentimental poet. Schiller sees clearly enough that all classifications and terminologies have but a relative validity, and that the modern sentimental poet must necessarily give a new connotation to the names of forms that have been handed down from the ancient days of "simple" classical poetry (*Werke*, VIII, 369, note). And as he sees the impossibility of confining the emotion and the imagination of the poet within even the wider limits of the traditional greater divisions—epic, dramatic, and lyric—it is natural that he should not attempt to create or to observe a classification or a nomenclature of lyric forms.

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